

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF CODE ADMINISTRATION
ALEXANDRIA FIRE DEPARTMENT – FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY SECTION

SPECIAL EVENT GUIDELINES AND PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

Revised March 2012

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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New Construction Division (Electrical, Building, Amusement Device Permits)

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Fire Prevention Division (Fire Prevention Permits, Fireworks)

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Alexandria Fire Department

Emergencies (Fire or EMS)

Non-Emergency

911

(703) 838-4660

Overview

Special Events on City or public property within the City of Alexandria must be approved by the City Special Events Committee, before any permits will be issued. For events in City Parks, proof of reservation from the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities must be provided at time a permit application is made to other City agencies. If you are planning a special event or have additional questions about the special events application process, please contact Parks and Recreation at (703) 746-5418, or Cheryl Lawrence, the Special Events Coordinator, at (703) 746-5419.

This guideline covers general fire prevention permit requirements, building code permit requirements and fire safety guidelines for outdoor cooking, power sources, compressed gases, amusement devices, and fireworks. Permits for these items are issued through the Permit Center in the Department of Code Administration. **Applications for all permits must be submitted at least 30 days prior to the event date, or the event may not be approved.** Additionally, for events where food vendors will be serving food or where food is served to the public, the Health Department has specific regulations and may require permits from that office. The Health Department also has a 30-day filing deadline for their permits.

The information for the Health Department is:

Department of Environmental Health
4480 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22302
(703) 746-4910

Fire Prevention Permits

Many events will require fire prevention permits for certain functions. A listing of the common fire prevention permits (FPP) and fees follows below. Inspections for fire prevention permits will generally be done the day of the event by a Fire Marshal or Fire Inspector, at which time the permit will be issued.

Requirements for building, electrical and amusement device permits are listed in another section of this document. Inspections for building, electrical and amusement devices are handled by the New Construction Section and are generally done during normal business hours, Monday – Friday, excluding holidays. Overtime inspections that occur on holidays or outside of normal business hours require that all overtime inspection fees are paid prior to the event date.

<u>Permit Type</u>	<u>Code Reference</u>	<u>Base Fee**</u>	<u>Total Fee</u>
Propane (any amount)	3801.2	\$125.00	\$156.64
Compressed gases	3001.2	\$150.00	\$187.95
Open flame cooking device	308.4.1	\$125.00	\$156.64
Tents over 200 sq. feet/Vendor (Includes membrane and air supported structures)	2403.2	\$150.00	\$187.95
Amusement Buildings	403.3	\$175.00	\$219.29
Carnival or Fair	403.2	\$275.00	\$344.59
Trade Show / Exhibit	403.3	\$150.00	\$187.95
Special Outdoor Assembly	403.1.2	\$250.00	\$313.25
Fireworks	3301.2	\$250.00	\$313.25
Indoor Vehicle Display	314.4.1	\$125.00	\$156.64
Open Burning (bonfire)	307.2	\$125.00	\$156.64

*Special Event Vendor Permit	2403.2	\$150.00	\$187.95
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(This permit will cover any vendor who may use multiple devices such as a tent, open flame cooking device, propane tanks or heating devices as part of their operation in lieu of obtaining multiple permits. **Permits are required for each vendor and are event/site specific.**)

**** Each of the listed fees above will have an administrative fee (13.5%), permit center fee (9%), training program fee (.3%), and an information technology fee (2.5%) attached.**

Applications for all permits must be filed no later than 30 days prior to the event date so that staffing needs can be determined (with the exception of fireworks, which require filing of permits no later than 60 days prior to the event). Fees are non-refundable and must be paid prior to permits being issued.

Applications and fees will not be accepted on the day of the event. Failure to obtain a valid permit will result in non-participation in the event. Fire Prevention permits must be obtained for each location or event, unless otherwise approved by the Fire Code Official

General Fire Safety and Fire Extinguishers

- **All deep fat fryers or similar type cooking appliances using hot oil or grease must be located in a mobile unit or trailer equipped with an approved hood ventilation system and an approved fire suppression system.** Any such type of appliances shall not be relocated under tents or canopies unless they are specifically approved by the Fire Code Official at least 30 days in advance of the event. The hood suppression system shall be inspected and tested every 6 months in accordance with the appropriate National Fire Protection Association standard. The suppression system must be tagged with a current inspection tag or it will not be approved. In addition, current inspection documentation must be provided to the Fire Marshal or Fire Inspector upon request. The ventilation system must have a cleaning schedule posted, with regular cleaning to be done at least semi-annually. Documentation of hood ventilation cleanings shall be provided to the Fire Marshal or Fire Inspector upon request. At least one class K fire extinguisher shall be installed and have a current inspection tag posted on the extinguisher.
- All heat producing equipment and appliances, electrical cords, and mechanical equipment shall be in good condition and be maintained. All equipment is subject to field inspection.
- Where fire extinguishers are required, the extinguishers shall be of appropriate size and type for the event. Extinguishers shall have a minimum 4-A rating (or 2 extinguishers with a minimum 2-A rating). Where cooking oils or flammable and combustible liquids are present the extinguisher must also have a B rating. It is recommended that a multipurpose ABC type extinguisher be used. Water based fire extinguishers are not acceptable for use. Class K fire extinguishers are required for all deep frying in mobile trailers.
- Personnel shall be properly trained on the use of fire extinguishers.
- All extinguishers must have an approved inspection tag attached to the extinguisher showing the last date of annual inspection by a qualified service company, or provide receipt of purchase to show that the extinguisher is in new condition. Inspections over one year old will not be accepted. Check all gauges to ensure the extinguisher is properly charged and check that the extinguisher is in overall good condition.
- Keep all combustible waste material and trash in covered containers and away from any heat source.
- All consumer fireworks are prohibited by ordinance in the City of Alexandria. Fireworks displays require a fire prevention permit and approval from the Fire Code Official.

Outdoor Assembly Events, Carnivals and Fairs, Trade Shows and Exhibits

- All special outdoor assembly events, carnivals and fairs, and Trade Shows and Exhibits require a Fire Prevention Permit prior to the event taking place. For the purpose of this policy, **a Special Outdoor Assembly event shall be defined as any event where cooking operations are being performed and there is an estimated attendance over 1,000 people. A Carnival shall be defined as any event that includes rides or amusement devices open to the public. A Fair shall be any event that includes various types of vendors and displays (such as arts and crafts or entertainment) and has an estimated attendance of over 1,000 people.**
- Special Outdoor Assembly Events, Carnivals and Fairs, and Trade Shows / Exhibits require a safety plan to be submitted at least 30 days prior to the event start date and shall be included and maintained with the Fire Prevention Permit application. The safety plan shall include a site map identifying the locations of fire lanes, fire apparatus access points, food vendors, amusement rides, tents, any hazardous materials (including propane), fire hydrant locations, citizen assembly points and emergency evacuation shelters.
- The event coordinator shall provide an on-site contact numbers and an emergency contact phone number for at least five event coordinators.
- Trained crowd managers shall be provided for all events over 1,000 people, whether indoor or outside. One crowd manager shall be provided for every 250 people to assist with emergency evacuation. The Fire Code Official may modify the required number of crowd managers if the facility is sprinklered or depending on the nature of the event.

Open Flames, Propane and Outdoor Cooking

- A Fire Prevention Permit is required for any open flame cooking device, prior to use (including sterno). A fire prevention permit is required for the storage or use of any amount of propane gas. A Vendor permit may be applied for by each vendor that is using a tent, open flame cooking device and fuel source without having to obtain multiple permits (see permit fees).
- A fire extinguisher must be located near the open flame device, within 30 feet. The extinguishers shall have a minimum of a 4-A (or provide 2 with a 2-A rating) and should be designed for multipurpose use (such as an ABC type extinguisher). **Do not use water based fire extinguishers where grease and oil are present.** Fire extinguishers must be in new condition or have a current annual inspection tag from an approved testing agency attached to the extinguisher. Documentation of testing or receipt of purchase shall be made available to the Fire Marshal or Fire Inspector upon request.
- Spare propane cylinders shall not be located within 10 feet of a tent, canopy or building opening.
- All propane and other compressed gas cylinders shall be stored and maintained in an upright position, and shall be secured to prevent cylinders from falling. Milk crates may be used to secure smaller cylinders, but the cylinder size must be proportional to the crate. Larger or taller cylinders must be secured to a rigid object that will support the weight of the cylinder to prevent it from falling over.

- NO SMOKING signs shall be posted on or around propane cylinders.
- Propane cylinders shall be located as far from an open flame or other potential ignition source as practical while in use. Cylinders and gas connections shall be checked by the user to ensure there are no leaks or defects **PRIOR** to using propane or an ignition source. The Fire Marshal or Inspector will order any defective or malfunctioning appliance out of service until necessary repairs can be made.
- A physical barrier shall separate any open flame cooking device or other hot surface from the general public, to prevent accidental exposure to hot surfaces. Cooking appliances shall be separated from the general public as much as possible.
- In the event of a burn injury or malfunction of any open flame or propane fueled device, the incident shall be promptly reported to the Fire Marshal on duty.
- Open flame devices such as woks, sterno, kettle corn units, propane powered stoves or flat topped grills may be located under a tent or canopy, provided that the flame is covered and shielded by a non-combustible barrier and is not exposed. (Non-combustible is anything that will not readily burn in the presence of an ignition source, such as metal.)
- Open flame devices must be constantly attended while in use.
- Cooking which produces grease-laden vapors **SHALL NOT** occur under a tent or canopy. (Please consider this when applying for special events, as the Health Department requires all food preparation surfaces and cooking areas to be covered.) For the purposes of this policy, a grease laden vapor shall be vapor or exhaust produced from the cooking of meat or other animal fats and cooking oils.
- Open flame cooking cannot be performed inside of a tent or within 20 feet of a tent.
- All deep fat fryers, woks used for deep frying, or other similar cooking devices using hot oil or grease shall be in a mobile unit or trailer with a vented hood and an approved fire suppression system.

Tents and Membrane Structures

- Tents, air supported structures, and membrane structures over 200 square feet in area require a fire prevention permit to be obtained prior to use. A detailed site plan must be submitted at time of application, including flame resistance certification. Fire prevention permits shall be deemed to meet the requirements for building permits required for tents over 900 square feet in area that are for temporary use.
- Flame resistance certification shall include the following information:
 - Name and address of the tent owner
 - Date the fabric was last treated, the name of the flame resistant chemical used for treatment
 - Name of the person or firm treating the material
 - Name and certification of the testing agency and the test standard by which the material was tested.
- Tent applications shall include details on the location and type of any heating and electrical equipment. An electrical permit may be required for certain lighting and fixtures.

- Tents, air supported and membrane structures shall be properly anchored and secured. The method of securing the structure shall be able to resist wind and weather conditions, up to 50 mph.
- Open flames shall not be permitted within 20 feet of any tent (including cooking appliances and sterno) unless the flame is not exposed and is covered by a non-combustible material, such as aluminum foil.
- **Open flame cooking or cooking that produces sparks or grease laden vapors SHALL NOT be permitted in or under a tent or canopy.**
- Combustible materials shall not be permitted within tents. NO SMOKING signs shall be posted in all tents,
- Tents with sides require exit signage to be posted and may require emergency lighting.
- Tents must be flame resistant and have an approved label attached showing proof of flame resistance. A copy of the flame resistance shall be submitted with the permit application.
- Propane cylinders shall be located outside of tents and be at least 10 feet from any tent opening.
- Waste material and combustible decorative materials are not permitted under tents. Trash and other waste materials shall be kept in approved covered containers until they can be properly disposed.
- Tents used for assembly purposes with an occupancy over 50 people shall be required to have exit and emergency lighting.
- Tents shall not be located within 20 feet of lot lines, buildings, parked vehicles, internal combustion engines, or other tents and membrane structures. For determining required distances, support ropes, cables and guide wires shall be considered part of the area of a tent, or membrane structure. (Note: Separation distance is not required where tents, canopies and membrane structures are not used for cooking and do not exceed a total floor area of 15,000 square feet.)
- Refueling of generators shall not be done within 20 feet of tents or membrane structures. Flammable and combustible liquids must be stored at least 50 feet from the tent, canopy or membrane structure.
- Generators must be at least 20 feet away and isolated from contact with the general public.
- Combustible vegetation and waste material shall be removed from the area occupied by a tent or membrane structure, and within 30 feet of such structures.

Stages and Platforms

- **Stages and platforms may require building permits, plans and inspections.** Stages, risers and platforms that are entirely constructed on site require plans that are designed and sealed by a Virginia Registered Design Professional, as well as a building permit and inspection by the New Construction Division. For portable stages, risers and platforms that are pre-engineered, constructed within the limitations established by the manufacturer and are in good working condition, plans do not have to be certified by a Virginia RDP, but specifications on the stage, building permits and inspections are still required. No permits are required from the Department of Code Administration for the use of the City-owned stage. Questions regarding building permits and requirements for stages and platforms should be directed to the New Construction Section.

Electrical Safety, Connections and Electrical Permit Requirements

- Certain hard-wired electrical connections and large generators require electrical permits. Check with the New Construction Section to determine if an electrical permit is needed.
- Extension cords may be used for temporary purposes for most small power needs. Extension cords must be of appropriate size (gauge) to handle the electrical load.
- Extension cords and electrical connections shall be secured to prevent tripping hazards. Non-conductive matting shall be used for covering.
- Extension cords and all electrical equipment shall be in good condition, free of defects and be used in a safe manner. The Fire Marshal or Inspector will immediately order any defective or unsafe electrical device to be placed out of service until properly installed or repaired.
- Electrical connections and supply must be protected from contact by the general public.
- Flexible cords or cables used for generators, amusement devices and rides shall be listed for **extra hard usage**. Flexible cords or cables used for lights, sound systems, signs, and inflatable devices, such as moon bounces, shall be listed for **hard usage**. Extra hard usage flexible cords or cables shall be permitted for use as permanent wiring on portable amusement rides and attractions where not subject to physical damage.
- Cords and cables used outdoors shall be listed for use in wet locations and be UV/sunlight resistant.
- Junction boxes and wiring connections must be kept elevated a minimum of 6 inches from the ground and listed for wet locations.
- Open junction boxes and splices are prohibited.
- Temporary lighting for general illumination shall be protected from accidental breakage by a suitable fixture or lamp holder with a guard.
- Wiring for temporary lighting installed inside of tents or concessions shall be securely installed and protected from physical damage.
- Approved covers must be provided for all electrical switches and outlet boxes.
- Questions regarding electrical code, connections and permit requirements should be directed to the New Construction Section.

Amusement Devices

- **Building permits may be required for amusement devices, subject to the Virginia Amusement Device Regulations.** Amusement devices are defined as any structure or device that is open to the public and moves or conveys persons in a unusual manner for diversion. Examples includes gravity rides, gravity chutes, gravity slides, all bungee jumping activities, mechanical bulls, artificial climbing walls, passenger tramways, kiddie rides, circular or flat rides, roller coasters and Ferris wheels. For the purpose of special events, inflatable devices such as a moon bounce, are considered amusement devices and may require a building and/or electrical permits. Questions regarding amusement devices and permit requirements should be referred to the New Construction Section. A building permit application shall be used when applying for all amusement devices.

- A listing of all rides shall be submitted at the time of permit application. Information shall be provided for each ride that includes the ride manufacturer and model number for each ride, at least 30 days prior to the event for review.
- A detailed site plan is required for all amusement device permits at the time of application. The plan must show the location of each ride and power source, exits from the site, emergency response routes and ingress, and the location of fire hydrants and fire department connections.
- Adequate fencing and clearances shall be provided to ensure that riders on amusement devices do not come into contact with any persons or nearby objects.
- Required inspections must be completed before the device can be operated for use.
- All amusement devices must comply with the Virginia Amusement Device Regulations.

Fees: For full explanation of fees, refer to the Fee Schedule posted on the website.

Fireworks

- Fireworks are prohibited within the City of Alexandria. A fire prevention permit shall be obtained for a public display. Applications must be filed no later than 60 days prior to the date of the display.
- Specific requirements for fireworks displays can be found in Chapter 4 of the City of Alexandria Fire Prevention Code, located in the Alexandria City Code.
- All fireworks displays shall comply with NFPA 1123 and the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code, as amended.
- Prior to the issuance of a permit for a fireworks display, a certificate of insurance must be filed which shall name the City of Alexandria as a co-insured on all policies. Policies shall be in the minimum amount of \$2,000,000 for each bodily injury and property damage.
- In the event that multiple jurisdictions or agencies are involved, such as displays on the Potomac River, the applicant shall ensure that all jurisdictional permits and requirements are satisfied. Proof of filing permits with other jurisdictions shall be made available to this office no later than 60 days prior to the display date.